United Nations A/50/PV.106

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

106th plenary meeting
Monday, 15 April 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Boonprakob (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 12 *(continued)*

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/847)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance on its twelfth meeting (A/50/525)

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the President of the General Assembly (A/50/926)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.69)

The Acting President: This afternoon the Assembly will continue its plenary meetings devoted to public administration and development. I call on Mr. Rubén Correa Freitas, Director of the National Civil Service of Uruguay.

Mr. Correa Freitas (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Eastern Republic of Uruguay became independent in 1830, with a Constitution, modelled on that of the United States of America, enshrining the separation of the three powers of State and a presidential system of government. The State was typical of the nineteenth century: a "judge and gendarme" liberal State assuming the essential duties of national defence, internal security, foreign relations, basic financial activity and justice.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the Uruguayan State took on other activities and tasks, either because they had been insufficiently developed by private individuals at that time or because it was understood that they were properly the State's responsibility in order to avoid monopolies and the transfer of profits abroad. Thus, in line with the reforms of José Batlle y Ordóñez, two-term President of the Republic, various state institutions were created. Known as autonomous entities, they were dissociated from the central power and entrusted with the production of electricity, banking activities, insurance, mortgages, ports, public education, retirement and so on.

This process of progressive intervention by the State in the economy continued to develop, encompassing other sectors of the economy, mostly in the area of industry and trade, such as fuel, alcohol and cement. After the Second World War this action culminated in the nationalization of industries — such as drinking water concerns and railways — that had originally been British.

Thus, by the 1950s we had already outlined very clearly the basic aspects of the so-called social state of law, or welfare state. It was precisely at the end of that decade that the symptoms of crisis that were to accelerate

96-85427 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

in the 1970s — inflation, commodity shortages, unemployment and strikes — began to manifest themselves, ending in urban warfare, which destabilized the political system and led to the military *coup d'état* of 1973.

In the 1980s there was a wave of privatization in the United States and in Europe. This extended to Latin America, which had been living under the rule of authoritarian regimes and which suffered the impact of a crisis resulting from foreign debt, fiscal deficits and the hyper-atrophy of the state system.

Uruguay was not immune to this crisis. Upon the return of democracy in 1985, after the elections of November 1984, in which Mr. Julio María Sanguinetti was elected President, debates on State reform — albeit timid ones — began to take place. Naturally, the problems that called for urgent attention after the establishment of democracy were very different. These included the release of political prisoners, the reinstatement of officials who had been dismissed under the de facto regime, the recovery of previous salary levels and the adoption of a series of measures to bring about economic recovery, among others.

The crisis of the 1980s in Latin America was due to the contradictions which arose essentially as a result of three big problems: first, authoritative Governments; secondly, instability related to fiscal deficits; and, thirdly, foreign debt. Faced with the difficulty of solving these problems and the inability to do so, the region gradually returned to a democratic track, once again giving legitimate authority to their rulers through the ballot box.

This brought about the adoption of macroeconomic changes focused on the reform of the taxation system, on the opening up of the economy through lower tariffs and on the reform of the State through privatization, deregulation and decentralization.

The opening up of democracy in Uruguay in 1985 brought about not only national peace, a *sine qua non* for the political stability of the country, but also the adoption of economic measures designed to reduce the fiscal deficit, to mitigate the impact of the foreign debt, to promote foreign investment through increased exports, to open up the economy through lower tariffs and to reduce unemployment through job creation and so on.

As a result, the democratic Government of Uruguay achieved a 15 per cent growth rate in gross domestic product in the first five years. The fiscal deficit, which in 1985 had been 9.5 per cent, decreased to 6.3 per cent by 1989. Exports enjoyed vigorous growth, from $925 million in 1984 to $1.54 billion in 1989. Finally, the annual inflation rate, which in 1985 had been 82 per cent, was reduced to 57 per cent by 1987. Despite numerous difficulties arising from a number of adverse external conditions — such as rising interest rates and falling prices of raw materials — inflation has continued to drop significantly since 1991. By 1995, the annual inflation rate was approximately 33 per cent and the rate projected for this year is barely 20 per cent.

In Uruguay, as in the rest of the world, the issue of the state became the subject of intense discussion in the 1980s. It is, however, necessary to note that concepts related to administrative reform reached their zenith in the 1960s, promoted by various international entities, such as the United Nations. This was reflected in the constitutional reform of 1966, which decreed the creation of a civil service to ensure a more efficient public administration.

As I stated in 1988, we must ask ourselves whether the question we face is one of reforming public administration, the state or society. We must note, first and foremost, that the problem of reform of public administration has already been surmounted, as evidenced by contemporary practices. What concerns us now is the question of state reform and, thus, the reform of society as a whole.

After the experiences of the 1960s and 1970s, we can say that at the end of the twentieth century both Latin American countries and developed countries, such as those of Europe, are considering a much deeper sort of administrative reform. This concept of reform includes reform of public administration, but is not limited to merely changing, eliminating or creating ministries or to procedural problems. It encompasses something much more profound: the role of the state itself. It asks what kind of state is needed for future societies. This means that the problem and the purpose of the current reform process encompass the state as a whole and, therefore, society.

It is appropriate here to analyse the plans for reform of the State that have been carried out in Uruguay over the last 10 years, beginning with the democratic opening in 1985. We believe three different stages should be identified.

In the first stage, from 1985 to 1989, during the first term of President Julio María Sanguinetti, a gradual

reform of the State was undertaken in order to adapt its hyper-atrophied structure to modern realities and needs. The ideological debate on the reform of the State in Uruguay began precisely at that point.

What measures were adopted? First, with respect to human-resources administration, it was decided to impose a freeze on the hiring of new civil servants in order to avoid undue growth in their numbers. A training course for high-ranking executives in public administration was established, with the technical assistance of France's National School of Administration, in order to train future administrative officials.

Programmes were carried out to train and upgrade public-administration managers. Regulations were drafted on qualifications and promotions for central-administration officials, laying down merit and training as the essential elements for promotion. To all this it should be added that, during that period of government, it was decided to rehire almost 11,000 public employees who had been dismissed under the de facto Government between 1973 and 1984.

Secondly, with regard to public industries, in line with the policy of gradualism, we began restructuring the State railroad, which at the time had over 9,000 officials and an annual deficit of $40 million. Passenger service was eliminated, priority was given to freight services, and 7,000 officials were redeployed within the public administration, thus reducing considerably the annual deficit. Similarly, it was proposed in Parliament that the State aviation industry should become a public/private joint venture and that the State agency for fisheries should be abolished.

The second stage took place between 1990 and 1994. The need to enact a law on public companies was put forward, and after almost a year of intense debate the executive branch was empowered to grant concessions and other permits for the performance of public services. This law transformed the aviation industry into a public/private joint venture. The telecommunications industry was also slated to become a joint venture, with private capital, and the State agency for fisheries was abolished.

A referendum was called for by certain political organizations and unions on some of the articles of the law on public companies. On 13 December 1992, the citizens of Uruguay came out heavily in favour — with a majority of 72 per cent of the valid ballots — of annulling four articles of that law, which essentially gave broad powers to the executive branch in sales of public companies.

This expression of the will of the people of Uruguay in 1992 can be read as a preference for gradual implementation of the instruments of State reform, particularly with regard to the privatization of public companies. The law on public companies — law 16.211 — specifically addressed concessions of public services. I do not believe that this can be construed as opposition to State reform. On the contrary: it shows a desire for State reform, but with transparency and adequate guarantees, a reform that should be undertaken not as vengeance for the past but as an affirmation of the fact that the State must be modernized and that society must evolve. The experiences of other countries of the region led Uruguayans to suspect that indiscriminate sales of State companies had been effected in ways that were not in the best interests of the country.

The third stage of this State reform process began with the second term of office of President Sanguinetti. It was characterized by the utilization of the national budget as the principal tool for State reform, with the parameters of reform clearly defined on the basis of an organizational restructuring of the central administration. There were specific actions in connection with personnel policy, first, to reduce the number of public-service employees, which remained stable throughout a decade of return to democracy — approximately 242,000 out of a population of 3 million; and, secondly, by introducing the concepts of excellence and quality in public administration.

The enactment of the 1995 budgetary law was an important step forward in the process of State reform, in that it provided for a series of changes and transformations in the organization, structure and functions of the central administration. This law transformed various State agencies and created others specifically designed to lead ultimately to the privatization of many areas not essential functions of the State.

As regards public servants, in the current, third stage between 1995 and 1999, a system of performance evaluation has been established that will reward economically those officials evaluated as "excellent" or "very good". That is why the new budgetary law provides for the ranking of managers, as well as incentives for retirement from public administration and retraining for public officials wishing to join this system. In the final analysis, the reform of the State, as provided for in the 1995 budgetary law is aimed principally at achieving greater efficiency in the provision of public services, enhancing the mechanisms necessary for higher-

quality services, and, in general, pursuing excellence in the performance of public servants.

State reform must be carried out with personnel rather than against them. The intention of reform is to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of services and not to dismiss or lay off public employees. Inevitably, this must be done with the support of all those involved — employees and managers — on the basis of the idea that the major beneficiary of State reform will be the citizenry, which is fully entitled to high-quality State services that are optimally competitive, efficient and cost-effective.

After 10 years of experience in State reform in Uruguay, we can say that many important steps have gradually been taken, transforming a sluggish, unwieldy and inefficient State. In this respect, economic policy and efforts to limit the hiring of public officials must be highlighted. We must also note in this connection the modernization and growth of such State industries as electricity production and telecommunications, which have substantially altered their managerial style, with personalized attention to the client and a very marked improvement in the quality of service: blackouts and dead telephone lines are things of the past.

We are eager for greater efficiency and competitiveness in the public sector, for ongoing improvement in the provision of services, for excellence in public services, for the application of the most modern managerial techniques, for social marketing and for ethics in public service, which requires respect for such specific values as institutional loyalty and transparency of procedures.

We now have the opportunity to build a new State, and the key to this endeavour has been given us by a new, much clearer definition of the essential functions it must assume. It must take on new ones in order to meet challenges of modern society and delegate those that can be carried out by private individuals for the benefit of society. This State relies on efficiency, reducing fiscal pressure on civil society so that it can develop in competitiveness. The new State determines its staffing needs, putting an end to indiscriminate appointments of public servants. It values excellence in the performance of its officials, trains its personnel for management positions and encourages development and improvement in its officials.

But the new Uruguayan State is not weak, nor does it represent the negation of the State. State reform in Uruguay has not been undertaken with a hatred towards all things public or as revenge against the welfare state and against activism. It has been carried out with affection, with respect for traditional values and in the awareness that it is not a matter of destroying the State, but rather of building a new one.

In the end, reforming the state means endowing it with greater efficiency and flexibility and with new tools, making it stronger. The economic and social development of a nation is inconceivable if the state is weak and if its civil society is free to exploit the market economy with no state intervention whatsoever. The state must guarantee social equity and human rights, protect the environment and fight poverty.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that it is a challenge for Uruguay to reform the State; on this reform will depend, to a great extent, the economic development and social justice without which the consolidation of democracy as a political system is inconceivable.

The Acting President: I call on Mr. Frantisek Pauliny, Director for International Cooperation at the Ministry of the Interior of Slovakia.

Mr. Pauliny (Slovak Republic): On behalf of Mr. L'udovit Hudek, Minister of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, I would like to make this statement on public service and development in the Slovak Republic:

> "Let me start by expressing thanks for the opportunity to participate in the fiftieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations as a representative of the Slovak Republic, a country located in the heart of Europe. I am truly honoured to be given the opportunity to speak on behalf of my country and to share with the Assembly our position on a topic of such importance as public service and its further development.
>
> "While supporting development throughout the world, the United Nations has shown sensitivity in understanding rather quickly that the economic and material prosperity of the various countries and parts of our world depends upon the environment in which economic phenomena occur, and it is public service which represents the very environment for these phenomena.
>
> "Moreover, while the public service of a particular country constitutes an internal issue of that country, in an international context the bodies

in charge of the administration of this important sphere of the state administration — whether ministries of the interior, ministries for public administration or governmental commissions and committees for public service — have much important experience to share with each other.

"In the Slovak Republic, the first significant steps in reforming public service were taken in 1990. At that time, the three-level system of National Committees was abolished after almost 40 years of existence and was transformed into a two-level system of local State administration. At the same time, local self-government bodies were established. Municipalities and cities have become the principal democracy-forming entities of Slovakia. It was a rather important step, given the conditions of the period.

"Municipalities have become the basic regional units and have acquired legal status, with elected bodies and self-government. The State has transferred all its property which had belonged to the municipalities prior to 1949 back to the municipalities.

"The most recent period has meant for the Slovak Republic a process of drafting legislation to enable the country to implement further stages of the local self-government reform started in 1990. In March 1996, the Government and the National Council of the Slovak Republic passed a new law on the regional and administrative structure of the Slovak Republic, setting up eight higher regional and administrative units and 79 lower administrative units. As a result, the first- and second-level State administration bodies have been reduced from 121 to 79 districts and from 38 to 8 regions, respectively. The Government of the Slovak Republic believes that this step will contribute to more efficient and economically less demanding operations of the local State administration throughout Slovakia.

"The suggested new administrative structure was presented in the media. The central bodies of State administration, local State administration offices, scientific and university institutions, the Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia, together with individual cities and municipalities, were given the opportunity to comment on it.

"Districts will become the basic units of State administration, and their centres will have to be equipped to enable them to accommodate all and to allow the functioning of first-level bodies of local State administrations, as well as the other State regional bodies and facilities performing administrative services. The regional centres should provide similar facilities for the second-level bodies.

"Names used in the State language, as well as the principles of professional scientific terminology concerning general and specific terms, will be respected as the names of the lower and higher administrative units. As a matter of fact, these are the names established both in our country and in the countries of our neighbours, as well as in other developed European countries.

"The package of the most pressing and timely tasks associated with the reform of the public service is expected to be completed by the end of May 1996. A draft law of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the powers of local State administration bodies is expected to be prepared by that time. This legislative procedure will complete the stage of local State administration development.

"The period after the end of 1996, when the draft law of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the establishment in the Slovak Republic of higher regional units of self-administration will have to be prepared will be the time to focus attention on the position and powers of local self-government bodies. The preparatory work is expected to be completed by the end of 1997, when the draft law of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the transfer of certain powers from local State administration bodies to local self-government bodies must be presented.

"The intricacy of these issues requires that we approach them in a rather sensitive manner. We are well aware that the local self-government entity is the body of first contact, and that is why the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government have continued to be implemented in relation to the position and powers of these local parliaments, although the Slovak Republic has not yet acceded to the Charter.

"It is very clear to us that the functioning of local public-service bodies and the level of their activities and those of their institutions depend on the qualifications of the staff of these bodies, that is, on the level of their knowledge, professional capacities and activities. These attributes are necessary in particular for the work of the local public-service bodies, which is extremely demanding, associated as it is with day-to-day decision-making on the rights, legally protected interests or liabilities of the citizen, with the provision of services to the public and with the creation of suitable conditions of public life with respect to almost every need and interest.

"That is why we pay due attention to the further increase of the level of knowledge of public servants. The concept of education and training in public service, adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic late last year, will become the basis of a system of various mutually-harmonized forms of education and training. No doubt, equipping the State administration with information technologies and rationalizing its activities will help to raise the standard of its work. The implementation of information technologies, in particular at the executive level, is expected to bring about the simplified, high-quality and speedy processing of matters presented by the citizen.

"The raising of the professional level of State administration workers and the improvement and utilization of information technologies are all part of a comprehensive system of reform of the local State administration. Thus, they must become a constituent part of local public-service activities. Based on the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, the objectives of the reform include the further development of the country as a legal State in which the rule of law will reign in all areas of social life. For public service, this means that all its activities must be performed within the legally-defined factual and regional jurisdiction while strictly adhering to law in any decision-making process and in the implementation of its enforcement function.

"The time focus of tasks involved in the reform of local State administration is on 1996 and 1997. Nevertheless, the reform of public service has been conceived as an ongoing process of ensuring a balance between the changing socio-economic conditions of the State and the steadily developing needs of the public. Adjustments in the state organization, support for the new knowledge and skills of public servants and a clear distinction between activities needed and not needed for the efficient functioning of public service are crucial for the maintenance of this balance. Consequently, all these reform measures have to be taken with sensitivity and respect for the historical background of Slovakia and the current socio-economic environment.

"We expect that the individual reform measures concerning public service in the Slovak Republic will be directed towards all the areas being addressed by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

"Strategic planning and the control of public service have to provide for a smooth parallel running of economic reforms and must be in accordance with the democratic principles of the State. The efficiency and effectiveness of public-service performance and the transparency of decisions with a sound control mechanism are the key criteria.

"When we assess their institutional and legislative framework, the reforms have to provide for the stability of the legal environment, the clarity of legal formulations and conditions conducive to the practical implementation of the laws adopted. The adoption of a public-service act is needed to regulate public service and the education and training of public servants, to improve the quality of the services provided to society and, of course, to establish conditions for stable and qualified performance by public servants.

"The mobilization of resources and control of public spending represent important factors for the establishment of conditions conducive to the implementation of reforms concerning public service; the importance of these factors may even be expected to grow continually in the future. Sufficient financial means and their efficient use represent components of the success of public-service reform.

"In conclusion, allow me to touch on a decisive element of the implementation of public-service reform: the mass media. In a democratic country, the citizen becomes a co-decision maker in issues of the development and further progress of the entire society; this is why timely and good

information has to be provided on issues of public interest. Consequently, one of the basic obligations of public service is to inform the citizen on proposed future objectives and to enable him to comment on them and to express his views concerning the issues. This is how public service reaches out and approaches the citizen, and this is our current priority objective."

The Acting President: I should like to remind members that, as decided this morning, the list of speakers in the debate on this item will be closed at 5 p.m. today. I therefore request those representatives who wish to participate in the debate but have not yet placed their names on the list to do so as soon as possible. Bearing in mind the long list of speakers, I appeal to representatives to make their statements as concise as possible.

I now call on Mr. Santiago Herrera, Deputy Minister of Finance of Colombia.

Mr. Herrera (Colombia): On behalf of the Government of Colombia, I wish to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address this session on public administration and development.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

For a variety of reasons that are common to many countries of our region, for many years Colombia followed a closed, protectionist, activist and centralist model. The country progressed, albeit slowly, for several years under this system. Nevertheless, over the past decade this model fell into crisis, revealing its profound political, economic and social limitations.

The growth of the Colombian economy, though apparently satisfactory in comparison to that of most countries of the region, entered a stagnant phase, which, in conjunction with the globalization of economic activity, showed that, if the country continued along the same lines, it would be doomed to marginalization and ostracism.

In the past decade, our Colombian State was weak in areas in which it should have been strong and intervened in activities in which the private sector would have been more efficient. Because of the limited resources available through taxation, the institutions of justice, police and national security were weakened. This gave rise to problems of public order that we are still fighting today.

The concentration of powers, resources and functions at the centre led to a loss of legitimacy for institutions, major regional imbalances and backwardness and marginalization in large areas of our territory.

The failure to utilize the efficiency of the private sector and the weakness of the State in carrying out functions that were properly public pointed to the urgency of achieving reforms aimed at modernizing the State and strengthening public institutions, while reorienting the economic role of the public sector.

This process can be described as follows. First, the programme of State modernization sought to involve the citizenry in decision-making by means of political, administrative and fiscal decentralization. In the economic sphere, the programme was based on the internationalization of the economy and the privatization or liquidation of those entities that did not have strictly public functions or whose functions the private sector could carry out more efficiently.

The opening of the economy made it necessary for companies to change and for institutions to modernize themselves at the same pace. It was therefore necessary to rethink the role of the State. Regulations, transactions and, in general, the modalities of state intervention clearly affect the ability of companies to compete on an equal footing in international markets and of foreign businesses to find fertile ground for investment in Colombia.

As part of this process, in recent years certain reforms have been adopted in an effort to create conditions conducive to the internationalization of our economy. These include changes in our systems of external trade, labour, finance, taxation, customs, ports, railways and highways.

These structural reforms have begun to bear fruit. Economic growth has resumed, rising from about 2 per cent in 1991 to 5.4 per cent and 5.7 per cent in 1994 and 1995 respectively; it is projected at 4.5 per cent for 1996. Such results demonstrate that Colombia's business sector is modernizing itself with the aim of meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities offered by the internationalization of the economy.

As to institutional strengthening, the requirements of the open economy led to institutional changes of great consequence for public administration. For instance, we have established an autonomous central bank that is specialized in the country's management and coordination of monetary policies, currency exchange and credit, with

the aim of ensuring price stability and making monetary decisions independent of Government pressure. The rate of inflation fell from an all time annual high of 32 per cent in 1990 to 19 per cent in December 1995.

Regarding public finance, we strengthened the financial institutions for State financial programming and introduced new budgetary norms to secure investments in projects that are duly formulated and coordinated by our central planning body. The necessary institutions were established to draft the four-year development plan, a key tool for directing the allocation of public expenditures, through a joint decision-making process. At the end of the last decade, the deficit of the consolidated public sector was close to 2 per cent of the gross domestic product, whereas this year we project a figure around 0.6 per cent, the same as the average over the past four years.

Similarly, the new 1991 Constitution authorized the National Government to make institutional integrated, wide-ranging reforms to offset the cost of the largest transfers to municipalities and the redistributions brought on by the elimination and restructuring of various bodies. These figures will be seen later.

The Constitution of 1991 refocused state activity by increasing the scope of education, health and social security. This led to an increase in social expenditure and the adoption of a system of subsidies on demand. I must digress here to explain the concept of subsidies on demand, because it will be repeated several times in my statement. Normally, in Colombia and many other countries, subsidies were offered to such entities as hospitals, schools and electric companies, which offered services for less than the operating costs. Thus, such entities, operating at a loss, were actually subsidized for the provision of their services. In Colombia today, we prefer to take those resources and give them directly to the general public, which then chooses which entity will provide the service. This is known in economic language as a demand subsidy, as opposed to an offer subsidy. In this way, important reforms were undertaken in the fields of health care, education, housing, public services, domicile services and protection for the aged. Social spending thereby increased by 81 per cent in real terms between 1990 and 1996, the result of broader scope and improvements in personnel working in these sectors.

It is important to mention here a few growth figures in expenditures, because, despite the fact that the State has tried to redefine its activities, expenditures rose dramatically, by roughly 63 per cent between 1990 and 1996, in real terms. The main increase has been in transfers from the national Government to municipalities and departments. While the social cost of these transfers grew by 100 per cent, in real terms social expenditures grew by 80 per cent, justice expenditures by 78 per cent and State-administration expenditures by 52 per cent, which is rather high but can be largely explained by personnel reductions in the public sector.

With this in mind, it should be noted that significant structural reforms were involved in the rising expenditures. In housing assistance, the State abandoned its role as a direct builder of housing and rechannelled resources into subsidies to people of limited means, allowing them individually or collectively, to seek housing either through the private sector or through do-it-yourself approaches.

We have terminated the monopoly of an earlier agency that dealt with the private sector. People can now freely choose which body they want to administer their pension and health-care insurance. As for education, we have made it possible for the poorer segments of the population to obtain demand subsidies, and use them for either public or private education. However, supply subsidies are being retained; these are the main means of access to education for the poor. As to public housing services, we have decided to eliminate supply subsidies, and are putting in place demand subsidies. Moreover, as a general policy, we are opening this area to private providers, although under very clear operating regulations.

The justice sector received top priority when we allocated resources. In the past, inattention to justice was one of the great failings in Colombia's national life. As a result, many cases were left unresolved, and there was a consequent high level of impunity. This changed in 1991 thanks to increased resources allocated as a result of changed State priorities. The need to increase expenditure for the defence and security sector, including the national police, became clear in the late 1980s. The need for the State to guarantee public safety and security was made clear by the fact that self-defence groups had come into being, and that private security companies were being formed: in 1993, the number of private guards was almost equal that of the State police. Among my country's measures to restore its monopoly in this area are the strengthening of mobile squads, the improvement of police and military intelligence and increases in both the police and the army.

Alongside these measures, opportunities have been opened for the private sector in areas where the public sector had failed. I have described the construction of public housing as one area where we have drawn on the private sector. In the past, maritime ports were operated by a single enterprise; very high costs, inefficiency and corruption increased the cost of doing business. Operation costs were very high because of the excessive costs. Privatization cut port fees by more than half. New rules were adopted for the energy industry, leading to more activity in the private sector. It is estimated that some 60 per cent of new investment will be from private sources by the end of the decade. They are expected also to play a growing role in generating and distributing electricity.

State institutions had a telecommunications monopoly for a long time. Fortunately, the private sector has now vigorously entered this field through cellular telephone services, and will probably be running long-distance telephone services by the end of this year. We also foresee partial privatization of television broadcasting.

The privatization of the pension system has broken the State monopoly on managing the work of employees. Similarly, the provision of private education and health service has been linked with the new system of demand subsidies. There is an attempt to change the system of making payments directly to public hospitals; the same resources will be made available to the public, so that they can choose their providers. Although the change from one system to another has been gradual, there has already been a notable improvement in the provision of services and thus in the well-being of the population.

A system of contracting out the building of roads has been put in place. We are hoping that most roads will be built by the private sector through such contracts. New oil pipelines are also being built and operated by the private sector.

Most privatization activity has been in finance and telecommunications. Although transportation does not appear to rank highly in the privatization figures, I want to stress that this is the area in which the greatest number of outside contracts have been made, for instance with regard to ports, the construction of roads and, currently, airports.

Between 1990 and 1996 all the administrative sectors of the State, and most of its institutions, were reformed. We have done away with many government jobs, which has lowered costs. Between 1991 and 1993, some 42,000 State workers were laid off: between 6 and 7 per cent of the public payroll. The largest group of these, some 15,000, worked in the transportation sector. Privatization of tax and customs duty collection made possible great cuts in the relevant ministry. Despite the large number of layoffs in the public sector, between 1990 and 1995 unemployment rates fell, and the number in employment rose by some 600,000. The strategy of altering the balance between public and private employment has, therefore, been a success. However, because of certain changes in legal interpretation, and because some of the processes of administrative restructuring were affected by lawsuits against the nation, which resulted in costly compensation payments: in 1995, for example, payments totalled nearly $100 million. There is an urgent need to coordinate executive, legislative and judicial activities to improve the effectiveness of the State administration and avoid this exhaustion of the public treasury.

Political, administrative and fiscal decentralization in 1968 have resulted in strengthening the decision-making capacity of the subsidiary bodies of national entities throughout the country. Pursuing this trend, we adopted measures in 1985 and 1986 to modernize municipal and departmental systems in this area. The most significant factor was the decision to transfer resources from the national government to the municipalities. In 1986 the municipalities received one quarter of the income from value added tax. Recent decisions have transformed that share, which by 1992 had grown to 45 per cent. That decision marked a major institutional revolution. The idea was that municipalities would henceforth be more involved in public services than the national administration, which meant the elimination of a number of national bodies, whose functions were transferred to the departmental and municipal level.

Decentralization established new criteria in public administration. In line with the ideals of administrative reform at the local level, there were improvements in the management of civil society, with many modes of participation in Government by the community and by society as a whole. In 1986, we introduced popular elections for mayors and created local plebiscites by amending our Constitution. The 1991 Constitution ordered more resources to be transferred to various territorial entities to fund departmental expenditure for health care and for pre-school, basic, secondary and vocational education. In 1996, these transfers will reach 24.5 per cent of the national income. It increased by 138 per cent between 1990 and 1996.

The 1991 Constitution also ordered municipalities to increase their contribution to national resources, which should account for up to 21 per cent of national income by the year 2000. Priority will be given to social investment: in the areas of health, education, drinking water, and sanitation. Given the anticipated financial situation and level of participation, the nation will be transferring 46 per cent of national income to the territorial entities by the year 2000. However, this increased transfer of funds to regions without a corresponding transfer of responsibilities has put fiscal pressure on the Government, despite tax reforms which raised taxes from 10.6 per cent of gross national product in 1990 to 12.5 per cent in 1996. This increase barely offsets the transfer of resources, which represented 2.1 per cent of gross national product. As we transfer responsibilities, we must improve the system by which the management of regional expenditures are evaluated.

The 1991 reform of the political charter will make it easier for communities that receive State services to monitor and investigate the activities of municipal and departmental governments.

In Colombia we are now developing a result-oriented public-management programme designed to strengthen two basic aspects of State administration: integrated management with citizen participation and the institutional capability of government organs and entities. Integrated management means coordinating planning processes, government activities and evaluation. Thus, planning ceases to be a static process and becomes a dynamic one receiving constant feedback. In this process, constant evaluations of results and execution of plans are required in order to reformulate strategies and redirect them when necessary.

Institutional capability is provided by the management resources and processes an entity uses to achieve its ends. In addition, the entity must be clear about the mission it is to fulfil within the State framework and must be able to assume its responsibilities efficiently.

This reform process is being continued through the recent policy of eliminating and simplifying paperwork. The measures adopted a few months ago were conceived and decided upon in parallel to the formulation of an integrated policy for fighting corruption in public administration. Last year the paperwork-simplification policy was strengthened by uniting diverse social, economic, political and institutional actors in a grand crusade for efficiency. Under this policy, citizens will be able to carry out their dealings with the State more smoothly, without onerous, complicated procedures. These measures went into effect immediately.

At the same time, in the fight against crime in public administration, the State system of penalties was broadened, clarified and made more expeditious. In 1995 the anti-corruption statute was decreed. The policies that have been implemented in this area are very important for strengthening citizens' faith in public activities and strengthening the administration at all levels.

A system for reporting possessions and income was also drawn up, by which the evolution of a public servant's wealth during his or her period of service, up to retirement, can be traced. The system of penalties was strengthened by the establishment of new and more drastic measures to prevent crime and corruption among public officials, and some existing measures were reinforced and better defined.

Not-for-profit organizations that deal with public resources will be held to the same standards of responsibility, as if their administrators were State officials, and their activities will be subjected to strict controls. Provisions relating to accounting, finances and auditing will result in stricter control over these organizations; their use of State-supplied resources will also be watched.

A unique disciplinary code was also enacted; it applies to all public servants, contractors providing services and all others who carry out public functions on a temporary or permanent basis — with the exception of members of the armed forces, who are subject to special rules.

It is also necessary to insist that public service be professionalized, to make the instruments of administrative reform more expeditious and to overcome the problems stemming from the separation of personnel by providing all relevant legal and administrative support. We should realize that an effective and efficient State cannot be achieved without everyone's help. In order for this constantly evolving process to be successful, we need the strong will and commitment of all citizens and, of course, the conviction that modernizing the State is more than just a possibility — that it is an urgent requirement for the progress and development of the country.

The Acting President: I call on His Excellency Dato Mazlan Bin Ahmad, Director-General of the Public Services Department of Malaysia.

Mr. Mazlan (Malaysia): I am honoured to have this opportunity to share with the Assembly Malaysia's perception of, and position on, public administration and its relevance to the development process. Indeed, the experience of Malaysia bears witness to the successes that can be achieved by public-administration interventions undertaken by Governments.

At the outset, let me put on record the Malaysian delegation's appreciation for the Secretary-General's report in document A/50/847, which contains important recommendations deserving our serious consideration. We strongly support the role of the United Nations programme, and appreciate its long experience in the field of public administration and development. We also request that it play an active role in following up the resolutions which will emanate from this session of the General Assembly.

The fact that an efficient and effective public administration is critical for the continued growth and development of any country is no longer in question. Public-administration policies must be congruent with prevailing socio-economic and political conditions. Policy interventions must be consistent with a country's stage of socio-economic and political development.

When we achieved our independence in 1957, the fundamental challenge to leadership, including the nascent Malaysian civil service, was to serve a multiracial, multireligious, democratic, developing country whose economy was commodities-dependent and whose security was threatened by a communist insurgency. Poverty was rampant, and many basic needs of the people had to be addressed. Rural poverty, particularly among the indigenous people, was particularly pronounced. In brief, we were in a position similar to that of many others at their moment of independence.

Today, 39 years later, I am happy to say that poverty has been drastically reduced, our economic base has been diversified, and social harmony continues to prevail. Our efforts for people-centred development have borne fruit. We are well on the way towards our national vision, Vision 20/20. We are committed to becoming a developed country, defined in our own way, by the year 2020.

The primary concern of Malaysian public-administration policies during the post-independence era was to ensure the maintenance of law and order, political stability and the establishment of democratic processes of government. In the sixties, as a result of our concern for economic development and distributive social justice, emphasis was placed on development administration and institution-building. This period saw the introduction of major structural changes, such as the implementation of the information-based and implementation-conscious Red Book System, introduced to monitor and coordinate development projects at local, state and federal levels.

Mr. Tejerina (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The institution-building phase of public administration continued into the 1970s with the introduction of the new economic policy, which focused on distributive social justice through the expansion of the national economy. Economic growth and social change was a prerequisite for our new economic policy. To undertake the task of rapid development, the public service was rapidly expanded, and several new institutions were established to address problems related to poverty, low agricultural productivity and income inequalities.

Along with the expansion came the need to improve the quality of public-sector personnel. Institutions such as the National Institute of Public Administration were set up with this goal in mind. Training played a significant role in ensuring the success of economic development. The establishment of the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) in 1977 heralded the movement towards administrative modernization aimed at promoting organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Since its establishment, MAMPU has introduced numerous reform efforts into the public service of Malaysia.

By the 1980s, the private sector had already emerged as a mature, key player, contributing to the nation's economic growth. The hitherto-established role of the public sector as the initiator of economic growth through direct intervention made way for a policy of encouraging the private sector to be the engine of growth. Consequently, the public sector changed its role from active participant to that of facilitator and regulator of economic development.

The Government also realized that the public sector had to be made leaner and more responsive to these changing needs. Major policy programmes introduced during this period include the privatization policy and the Malaysia Incorporated Concept. Privatization reduced the size of the public sector and trimmed the operating budget. The Malaysia Incorporated Concept was

formulated to highlight the urgent need for a greater partnership between the private sector and the public sector.

The objective of higher productivity and better-quality services was, and is still, relentlessly pursued. At the beginning of the 1980s a call was made for the inculcation of an "excellent work culture", based on positive work attitudes. This was done through a two-pronged initiative. One prong was to emphasize behavioural change and the cultivation of a positive work ethic and values among civil servants through campaigns such as "Leadership by Example" and "Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy Government", and the introduction of a code of ethics for the public service. The other consisted of a series of systems improvement programmes. Through the effective deployment of these and other policies and programmes in public administration, Malaysians from all walks of life are now enjoying a higher quality of service and its associated benefits.

It is important for me to reiterate that public administration interventions must be conducted in the manner best suited to the needs of the times and the changing environment. In this connection, the recommendation in paragraph 146 of the report of the Secretary-General calling for the development of customized programmes for national development is very appropriate, given the complex and diverse nature of the individual countries requesting such assistance. Certain Governments may need assistance in institution-building, while others may require expertise in the development of a vibrant private sector through privatization. Development assistance in whatever form will be more effective in meeting the needs of the developing countries if they are customized, taking into account the peculiarities of each individual nation.

It is widely accepted that with the appropriate enabling conditions in place the private sector could advance the collective interests of society at large as well. Indeed, we believe that there can be profitability with social responsibility. One need not be pursued at the expense of the other. Governments could, through a combination of interventions ranging from facilitating the opening up of new markets to the nurturing of small industries by opening free trade zones, create this conducive environment. More importantly, Governments could invest in infrastructure projects such as roads, ports and better communication, often the bane of the development process in developing countries.

The second method by which Governments can help create a healthy private sector is through privatization. Malaysia has, over the years, successfully privatized a variety of services, including power, telecommunications and postal services; railroad services; highways and bridges; and ports. Many more are in the pipeline. What is critical in this process is that the private and public sectors have positive perceptions of each other. A symbiotic relationship must be established between the two, so that each could realize the benefits accruing to both. This is the essence of the Malaysia Incorporated Concept. The public and private sectors in Malaysia increasingly view each other as partners in nation-building, with the private sector functioning as the engine of growth and the public sector as the catalyst to promote and facilitate such growth. In the words of Osborne and Gaebler, the public sector should "Steer rather than row".

To effectively play the role of catalyst and regulator, public administration officials must have the skills, knowledge and positive attitude to understand and exploit the opportunities arising from a rapidly changing environment. This is particularly critical in the current environment, characterized by international trade liberalization, globalization of markets and new geopolitical realities. Officials must be equipped with breadth of vision, besides technical and analytical skills.

In the case of Malaysia, emphasis is given to developing these skills through comprehensive human-resource development programmes. New entrants to the civil service are required to undergo induction courses. Throughout their career they are provided with numerous opportunities for upgrading their knowledge and skills, thus improving their competencies. Some such training programmes are required for their promotion. Presently the Government is giving priority to training and enhancing competencies in the use of computers and information technology. Significant investment is also being made in leadership training.

Case studies based on local experience in public management and governance are being developed to enable managers to understand the dynamics of public administration, management and leadership. Malaysia hosts the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Resource Centre for Case Development, as its project under the ASEAN Civil Service Conference. The Centre promotes the writing of local case-studies and disseminates them to all ASEAN training institutions.

Ultimately this will be a depository for ASEAN-based cases on leadership, management and public administration.

ASEAN cooperation in civil-service improvement started 15 years ago and has gathered momentum since then. In this context, Malaysia is in agreement with paragraph 155 of the Secretary-General's report, which recommends that the donor community recognize the role and significance of public administration in development and provide adequate resources in their programmes of assistance for improving public administration.

While proceeding with various initiatives to promote an efficient public administration at home, Malaysia, within its means, has endeavoured to assist other developing countries within the framework of the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme. These training programmes cover a wide variety of disciplines, such as information technology, project management, agricultural development, leadership and organizational development, and the training of trainers. The programmes are offered by the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) and other Government training institutions.

This technical assistance was introduced in 1980. To date more than 1,100 international participants from more than 70 countries have benefited from the international training courses conducted by INTAN alone.

Malaysia has also forged significant linkages with many international and regional institutions, with the aim of promoting both internationally and regionally based efforts towards development goals. Working with such organizations, we have on numerous occasions facilitated the exchange of experiences and ideas on a variety of issues ranging from development planning to environmental protection. There is every reason to believe that international cooperation will be pursued with increased frequency and vigour.

The report of the Secretary-General has also put forward a number of recommendations pertaining to the need to assist transition-economy countries and countries that are recovering from conflict and crisis. We have been particularly vocal in protesting against the injustices and atrocities committed against the peoples of these countries. Malaysia's call for the fair and decent administration of justice in these countries has been demonstrated in substantive terms, including through the provision of peace-keepers, donations in cash and kind, and the offer of humanitarian assistance bilaterally and under the auspices of the United Nations.

The development programmes recommended for the developing and transition-economy countries imply a heavy outlay of funds. It is therefore critical that prudent accounting methods and transparent financial-control mechanisms be installed. This is necessary to ensure that funds for such programmes are channelled strictly for that purpose.

Another important concern pertains to sustainable development. Increasingly, public administrators worldwide have had, and will have, to be prepared to address issues relating to the protection of the environment while promoting development. Environmental standards should not be allowed to be compromised in favour of over-zealous development projects. It is futile to pursue development projects at the expense of environmental standards, which are specifically designed to protect and enhance the quality of life. After all, the pursuit of quality of life is the goal of all development projects. Any people-centred development process must seek to achieve a harmonious relationship between man and his environment. Accordingly, we propose that specific concerns on environmental protection be incorporated into the recommendations of these meetings as well.

Finally, a note must be made about political stability and industrial peace. No country can pursue the important if it must expend all its energy trying to deal with the urgent. Malaysia learned its lesson way back in 1969. The fact that most members of our new generation have never heard of the 13 May incident is proof that we have learned that lesson well.

The Acting President: I next call on Mr. Grzegorz Rydlewski, Secretary of State and Secretary of the Council of Ministers of Poland.

Mr. Rydlewski (Poland) *(spoke in Polish; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Poland's experience in the course of its social, economic and political transformation clearly confirms the importance of the issues being discussed at the present meetings of the General Assembly.

The well-prepared and effective restructuring of the administrative system, along with civil-service reform, constitutes a significant tool for consolidating policy-making capabilities. Such restructuring and reform are also instrumental in improving the efficacy of the public system and facilitating the development of human resources. These two processes are of vital importance

for creating conditions in which it is the State that is serving the citizen, and not the citizen serving the State and its administration.

For a few years now Poland has been developing legal, structural and functional solutions to build an effective and efficient public administration. The purpose of the process is to create an administration that can carry forward the implementation of democratic social and economic reforms; an administration capable of utilizing all past experiences and of consistently and dynamically creating conditions for the well-balanced development of the country; and, finally, an administration that will ensure that the burden of reforms is evenly distributed, that will care about improving the living standards of Polish families, and that will work to ensure that citizens can live in peace, free from the fear of crime and economic abuse.

In our view, regardless of the specifics of individual countries, the unifying element of the global ideas on public administration developed by the United Nations should be the will to strengthen the openness, transparency, honesty, efficiency and effectiveness of administration in general, especially public administration. To provide citizens with adequate information about public affairs should be one of the leading principles.

Each and every decision or initiative taken by Governments in relation to public administration should be scrutinized to determine whether it fully takes account of and protects the necessary freedom of individuals and families, as well as that of non-State activities undertaken by groups. Anything that restricts citizens' initiative should be consistently eliminated.

The work of public administration should be guided by the principle that correct decisions should be taken, without unnecessary delay, and at the lowest possible administrative level — as close as possible to the people whom the decisions will affect — and that powers and accountability should go hand in hand.

The current meetings of the General Assembly coincide with a period in which Poland's work to implement brand-new solutions in the field of public administration is coming to an end. The relevant draft legislation is currently being debated by the Polish Parliament. The programme is expected to be launched at the beginning of next year. One of the main points of reference used in developing the draft legislation was a comparative analysis of solutions similar to those adopted by countries members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The programme is based on the following elements:

in-depth and comprehensive restructuring of Government administration, aimed at enhancing the effectiveness with which the Council of Ministers performs its functions of strategy development, coordinating activities, and assessment and supervision of progress;

radical reform of the Government's economic powers, doing away with the concept of ministerial responsibility for particular areas of the economy and moving towards a functional structure that will allow the Government to adopt a problem-oriented approach to economic issues and to perform the State's economic tasks in a progressive and effective manner;

establishment of a modern civil service for public administration, which will make a clear distinction between political posts filled by successive Governments, and non-political ones filled by civil servants and not liable to political change;

decentralization of public administration, which should lead to a reduction in the many local administrative units subordinate to Government Ministers and to the gradual transition of their functions to the administrative units of provincial governments or to local self-government.

Obviously, the scope and direction of public administration restructuring should be determined by the particular circumstances of individual countries. For Poland, the circumstances are:

the need to take account of changes in the Government's administration functions due primarily to transformations in ownership in the economy, the consolidation of local self-government and the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity;

the need to create within the Government a strong focus on developing programmes for the work of the Council of Ministers, a need that derives from the fact that the Government no longer implements policies defined by the ruling party;

the need to define clearly the decision-making powers within the Council of Ministers and other sectors of Government administration;

the need to change the procedures for developing draft legislation and normative acts by the Council of Ministers, to bring about necessary improvements in the quality of the law;

the need to create mechanisms for harmonizing Polish legislation with that of the European Union.

The restructuring of the public administration system cannot be confined merely to a reform of structures and procedures. A major area of improvement is in the field of personnel, where beneficial changes are called for.

In recent years Poland has made significant efforts to upgrade the qualifications of its administration staff to current international standards. International cooperation is very important for the fulfilment of this task. We are paying great attention to, and note with interest, the fact that the United Nations system programme includes support for the processes of change in the orientation of State administration by, *inter alia*, the creation of training opportunities.

The modernization of public administration systems must involve a redefinition of their functions. Poland's experience consistently points to the danger of the administration holding excessive powers. The best direction for change in this area seems to be to move towards a consolidation of regulatory and coordinating functions. The achievement of this goal is of primary importance if we are to create adequate and stimulating conditions for the activity of various social and economic entities, including those in the private sector, which is of particular importance in a period of transformation.

In this context, the major tool utilized by public administration in its work should not be decisions taken on an individual basis, but regulations intended to create mechanisms and frameworks within which independent activity can take place and social and economic entities can produce initiatives.

In order to face the challenges to which I have referred, public administration systems must be given adequate authority and responsibility. However, in this area Poland's experience shows that the administrative, legal and formal framework should not be too rigid. Only if it is not can public administration be active and responsive to needs, and open to change. It is only in such flexible circumstances that public administration can contribute to social development, while giving the non-government and private sectors sufficient room to utilize their potential fully.

From Poland's point of view, another important element of the restructuring process for administration is to make the system better prepared to handle tasks related to progress, including environmental protection. The administration system also needs to be equipped with mechanisms to monitor how well people's needs are being catered for, and to take appropriate measures to assist those who have inadvertently found themselves in particularly difficult circumstances.

Poland notes with satisfaction that the proposed draft resolution of the General Assembly is in keeping with the strategic programme to restructure the administrative system and reform the civil service implemented in our country. Poland declares its full support for the United Nations programme.

The Acting President: I now call on the Honourable Reverend Hendrik Witbooi, Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia.

Mr. Witbooi (Namibia): Namibia, as a country new to the community of free men and women, is only six years old. Our experience, therefore, is only that long. Nevertheless, please allow me, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia and its people, to share with this body our challenges and prospects in the field of public administration and our efforts at public service reform.

With the advent of independence, Namibia inherited a public service which was constituted to promote racial and ethnic stratification. As a result, public administration was, to an extent, routine-driven and not output-focused. In addition, the administrative machinery was not representative of the population of the country.

The absence of a capacity to formulate sound and achievable policies was conspicuous, as was the uncoordinated manner in which different units of the Government operated. Metaphorically speaking, the left hand did not know what the right hand was doing. In short, the public service that we inherited was dysfunctional.

Since independence, the Government of the Republic of Namibia has introduced a number of initiatives to set up an administrative machinery which will serve the interest of its people and also be representative of the demographics of the country — a Government machinery that is truly Namibian in nature and character.

The first task the Government assigned itself was to prepare a report on how different Offices, Ministries and agencies were to be made one, given the fact that the 11 ethnic administrations it inherited were based on the discriminatory apartheid system. This restructuring was carried out as a matter of great urgency soon after independence, and was based on the recommendations of the report of 16 March 1990 of the Committee on the Restructuring of the Public Service. A further aspect of this early task was the need to bring into the broad scope of the public service those sections of the population which under the apartheid system had been excluded from playing a role in the public affairs of their own country. Under the terms of article 114 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia the Government also had to retain personnel from the ethic administrations which were then in existence.

Furthermore, Offices, Ministries and agencies were created to perform new functions. The public service was therefore created as a matter of urgency, and this, coupled with the inherited structural anomalies, resulted in overlapping objectives and functions. It was against that background that the Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Namibia initiated a public service rationalization initiative to refashion and re-orient the new public service to make it more responsive, more efficient and more effective in coping with national development needs and priorities. From 1991 to 1994 efforts were made by all Offices and Ministries, under the guidance of the Prime Minister's Office, to rationalize the public service in order to provide an administrative response to the needs of independent Namibia.

The purpose of the rationalization of the public service was not simply to cut expenditure, but to establish rationalized organizations and establishments for Offices and Ministries in order to eliminate inefficiencies and duplications of functions which resulted from the inherited, pre-independent government service. Broadly, the aim of rationalization was to clarify mandates and responsibilities between and across Offices and Ministries.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia is mindful of the increasing size of the public service, which has grown from an establishment of 46,651, of which 42,562 positions were filled, to one of 78,038, of which 65,912 positions were budgeted for in 1995-1996, and 62,511 are filled. The figure is considered to be inflated by double counting.

Central to the public administration policy of the Government of the Republic of Namibia is the belief that the only thing in life that does not change is change itself. In view of that belief, the Government is continuing to re-examine its administrative structures and operations with the intention of bringing about improvements in the delivery of services.

To this end, the Prime Minister, among others, established the Wage and Salary Commission (WASCOM) on 18 January 1995. The objective was to study and analyse a number of different Government policies, laws, rules and regulations and other relevant issues which together make up the policy framework within which appropriate policy recommendations can be formulated.

The WASCOM report produced a total of 54 recommendations and conclusions within six broad and distinct areas: pay policy and pay levels; benefits and allowances; downsizing the public service; conduct and discipline; management support; and the Labour Act. The report indicates a shift in emphasis on several aspects of public service efficiency and effectiveness. It recommends, *inter alia*, several principles for the public service, specifically: a code of ethics and performance-related pay for public servants; a performance management system; professionalism and commitment in the public service, linked to training; and personal development and team work at all levels.

The Government's objective in all these exercises, particularly the recent one — WASCOM, is to strive for a lean, effective, efficient and professional public service, which is customer-focused and client-oriented, and which will provide Namibia with value for money. Embedded in this lies the vision of Namibia's public service of tomorrow. The Government has already begun to implement the time-bound recommendations of the WASCOM report, as adopted by the Cabinet.

Namibia remains committed to an improved and enhanced public service. While public administration might be country-specific, there is a common set of challenges. It is against this background that the Government of the Republic of Namibia, with great honour, hosted the recent Regional Meeting on Public

Administration and Development: From Structural Adjustment to Improved Efficiency in Government, from 25 to 27 March 1996 in Windhoek.

The Regional Meeting established the fact that between 1979 and 1988 most African countries undertook structural adjustment programmes. Those programmes had two stages: stabilization aimed at cost containment and thus at deficit reduction; and structural adjustment to reform economic policies and institutions in order to make more efficient use of resources and counteract the loss of growth caused by stabilization.

Most structural adjustment programmes have directly or indirectly led to public service restructuring, because size and the wages bill have normally been targets for reduction. The structural adjustment basic cost containment measures had mixed results. In a few countries numbers declined dramatically, but in others it took longer than expected to achieve reductions, or early reductions were offset by subsequent expansion. By the early 1990s, downsizing became widespread and substantial, fiscal and efficiency impacts were less than expected, and institutional reform was meagre.

Structural adjustment programmes have intensified the widespread lack of Government capacity to formulate and implement appropriate policies and programmes. In Africa, public-sector management reform should go beyond mere cost-containment and enhance government productivity, accountability and responsiveness in public-sector institutions.

However, various constraints on public-sector reform were identified, such as dysfunctional civil service organization; inadequate personnel management and training; insufficient management and supervisory skills; inadequate facilities, assets and maintenance culture; inadequate pay and benefits; lack of transparency and accountability; pervasive corruption; and the politicization of the civil service — for instance, staffing, decision-making and threats to employment stability and security.

The Regional Meeting concluded, *inter alia*, that accountability is central to efficiency in government. Legislatures in Africa are generally weak and lack information. While there has been increased respect for the rule of law in many countries in recent years, the need to strengthen legal institutions throughout the continent remains. Various measures were recommended to enhance accountability mechanisms.

Furthermore, a North-South partnership to combat trade bribes was called for.

Participants recommended that future initiatives in African public administration should be locally owned and draw on local knowledge and institutions, and that the focus should be on long-term governance issues rather than on only the short-run and narrow aspects of cost and size. Local commitment and ownership are the key to success.

In order to ensure that African civil services are able to cope with the challenges of the twenty-first century, the Meeting recommended that they grasp the opportunities offered by modern information technology and develop a culture of maintenance. Management-development institutes should be strengthened through the expansion and diversification of competency training and retraining programmes.

The Meeting also recommended that national Governments, with donor assistance, should mobilize resources for retaining, attracting and effectively utilizing qualified human resources and reversing the brain drain.

Finally, the Meeting endorsed the recommendation of the United Nations Secretary-General's report to the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly for greater South-South cooperation, through the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries in particular for exchange of information technologies. Donor agencies and international organizations, the United Nations in particular, should assist the African region in utilizing African capacities to provide training in the modernization of the national schools of public administration.

The need for capacity-building is an ever-increasing one and cannot be over-emphasized. The negative effects of structural adjustment programmes on Africa's social and economic development are a reality. In this context, we look forward to the adoption of a resolution which, *inter alia*, reflects the recommendations made at the Regional Meeting under the theme "From Structural Adjustment to Improved Efficiency in Government". Namibia stands ready to play its part.

The Acting President: Bearing in mind the long list of speakers, I should like again to appeal to representatives to make their statements as concise as possible.

I now call on the Permanent Representative of Austria.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): I will try to abide by your appeal, Sir, and be as brief as possible.

Our exchange of views this week on public administration and development comes at a particular and important moment, following the discussion and identification of the complex and relevant role of government and public administration in the field of development during a series of important global international conferences.

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, our Heads of State or Government stressed the need for integrating socio-economic and environmental concerns and recognized the necessity for adjustment and even a fundamental reshaping of decision-making.

The World Conference on Human Rights, in Vienna, recognized the interdependency and the mutually-reinforcing character of democracy, development and respect for human rights. Last year, at the Social Summit in Copenhagen, the Heads of State or Government stressed the need for accessible public institutions on an equal basis to foster social integration.

Now, this resumed session on public administration should seize the opportunity to underline the universal character of the questions involved with regard to governance. In deliberating the issue of public administration, the General Assembly will promote the reform processes in developing countries and in countries in transition. At the same time, we should not overlook the diversity in our experiences and the political and historical situations which led to different administrative systems. Our understanding must be led by the recognition of country-specific conditions.

The general principles and objectives, as well as our position on follow-up and institutional questions for this resumed session, were outlined in the intervention made by the Presidency of the European Union. My contribution will focus on some additional specific aspects relating to reform of public administration in Austria, public administration and development of cooperation, and the role of the United Nations in post-conflict situations.

First, I wish to address the reform of public administration in Austria. Streamlining governmental machinery, increasing its productivity and reducing costs, improving economic and financial management, promoting the interaction between the private and public sectors, and stimulating the participation of the various actors in this process have been at the forefront of recent efforts for public administration reforms in Austria.

The main targets of Austria's latest and largest reform projects are: the tightening-up of operational and management structures in public administration -- that is, public administration should focus on core business and try to seek out responsibilities which could be cut back, transferred or totally abolished; raising the administration's productivity by 20 per cent over the next four years; reducing the cost of administrative action by introducing cost accounting to improve cost consciousness in public administration, concentrating on management tasks such as staff motivation and personnel development as well as strategic performance targets; and focusing on sufficient capacities in the main areas of public administration for a more citizen-oriented administration.

I now wish to address development cooperation in the field of public administration and development. In the framework of its bilateral and multilateral development cooperation — including activities with economies in transition — Austria promotes the strengthening of capacities within public and private administration. Austria's development cooperation gives particular emphasis in its assistance to decentralization.

In its cooperation, my country aims at three main goals: first, the strengthening of participatory development based on the needs and initiatives of the partners in the development process; secondly, the strengthening and diversification of civil society and of the democratic bases of countries, allowing the people to take an active role in decisions affecting the fabric of society; and thirdly, the mobilization of the main actors in development and the necessary establishment or reinforcement of needed structures in public administration and management.

I am shortening my prepared text. Those who are interested can read the entire text in the version that has been distributed.

I now come to the third part of my statement: public administration in post-conflict situations and the role of the United Nations in this regard.

Recent conflicts in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti and elsewhere have demonstrated the crucial importance of public administration in post-conflict situations for efforts to rebuild after military devastation. Strengthening democratic institutions, public administration and criminal justice systems is essential in an overarching strategic framework of post-conflict peace-building to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict, as was underlined by the Secretary-General in his report on an Agenda for Development. The United Nations, *inter alia* through its Vienna-based Division on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, plays an important role in these efforts.

In this context, the importance of a holistic approach to peace-keeping operations must be recognized. Efforts to create conditions for lasting peace have to include civil components in post-conflict situations. Austria recognizes this need and promotes civilian peace-keeping and peace-building through its training programme at Stadt Schlaining.

The International Colloquium on Post-Conflict Reconstruction Strategies, which was held last year at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Schlaining, addressed specific aspects relating to such an integrated post-conflict reconstruction framework. The results of this meeting, which was organized by the Reconstruction and Development Support Unit of the United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services in cooperation with the Schlaining Centre, were issued as a document for the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We are looking forward to a follow-up meeting which should help to increase the operational capacities of the United Nations system in this important field.

I wish to make a very few final remarks. This resumed session will promote further the common understanding initiated through the recent cycle of international conferences on development. It will build the role of the United Nations and other international as well as national actors in this respect. It will be important to recognize the need to reshape Governments to better respond to the increasing complexity of development issues, with economies and societies becoming more and more interdependent. Principles and criteria for governance need to be developed on the basis of the rule of law. Transparency and accountability, as well as access by people to public services, have to be ensured. We hope and are confident that this session will work towards the fulfilment of these goals.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. José Octavio López Presa, Under Secretary at the Office of the Comptroller-General and Administrative Development of Mexico.

Mr. López Presa (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): At the outset, I wish through you, Mr. Acting President, to thank the Secretariat for having submitted its report on public administration and development, contained in document A/50/847, which presents interesting proposals on the future work of the United Nations in the field of public administration and development and on international cooperation in this field.

Public administration plays a vital role in the transformation of our societies. In the context of globalization and integration in which our countries are evolving, Governments are bound to assume a much more active role in helping to create efficient and competitive environments in our economies, thus enabling us to improve the standards of living of our peoples and contributing to the resolute head-on fight against corruption and impunity at the national and international levels.

There is increasing pressure on public administrations from the peoples of our countries to increase the value of social benefits on the basis of taxation. This compels public administrations to fulfil their tasks better with the same, or sometimes fewer, resources. This, however, is not enough to satisfy the expectations of society. What is required is that public institutions become bodies with a genuine understanding of service and professionalism. Aware of the challenge implied in this statement, Mexico supports any process of administrative reform that contains at least the following key elements.

First, there is citizen participation. Public bodies — particularly those that serve the population directly — must involve society in the formulation, orientation, development and evaluation of government policies and programmes, seeking to ensure that this task, shared between Government and citizens, becomes an ongoing democratic exercise. The systems of accountability to society must contain relevant, adequate and timely information on the objectives, goals and activities of public administration so as to allow the population to assess objectively the work of its Government.

Secondly, there is decentralization. The balanced development of regions is consistently limited by the mechanisms and practices used to allocate resources and responsibilities between central authorities and local levels of government. It is therefore necessary to review constantly the size and cost of government machinery in order to bring public administration and decision-making closer together when the need arises, while striving to ensure that the decentralization of resources, functions and responsibility to other levels of government will not disrupt the proper functioning of services rendered.

Thirdly, there is measuring and assessing public administration. Actions designed to strengthen performance evaluation, accountability and control systems of the public system constitute an important part of any reform of public administration. The allocation of public funds must be based on comprehensive information systems that will help to reconcile proper control with the flexibility required in this activity, thus guaranteeing not only that the principles of probity, honesty and transparency in the use of public resources will prevail, but also that an effective and efficient job will be done by the Government to satisfy the needs of its population.

It has become clear that there is a need to change the way public expenditures are traditionally controlled — from one based on a detailed set of administrative regulations and procedures to one that places special emphasis on evaluating the outcome of programmes and the impact of public policies on the population. It is time to instil in the people a sense of trust that their resources are being used for their benefit, that effective machinery is in place to prevent and detect corruption, and that appropriate and timely punishment will be meted out to those public servants who commit infractions.

In any type of administrative reform it should be recognized that public servants have the greatest potential to promote the structural changes required by all Governments. Overlooking them or failing to utilize them could often represent a fundamental obstacle to the modernization and development of administration. Therefore, constant loyalty, efforts and creativity on the part of public servants must be fostered in order to enhance their value and dignity in the public eye. It is essential to develop within governmental institutions a professional service that recognizes the importance of the work of public servants and ensures that an honest and efficient performance is an essential condition for job security and career development.

In public service, both employee entrenchment and high turnover contribute to the waste of human capital in the form of experience and specialized knowledge. Both practices, in the end, result in increased administrative costs and decreased effectiveness in institutions serving the public.

For this reason, Governments must promote policies that improve personnel selection, strengthen training as a priority investment, establish development opportunities within the public sector, grant incentives for efficient and responsible performance and guarantee retirement with dignity.

Rules and norms that, because of their complexity and obsolescence, limit economic development and foster the emergence of monopolies or corruption are very costly for societies. Thus, it is necessary to have a normative framework that makes governmental administration efficient and flexible and limits public servants' freedom of action.

The present Administration of Mr. Ernesto Zedillo is promoting in-depth reform in our country's Government, largely in the five major areas of change we have noted here. For this reason, he was pleased to hear of this initiative to promote the reform of the public administrations of the States Members of the United Nations. However, we must recognize that translating this proposal's goals into reality requires, in addition to resources, a decisive, open cooperation between countries that have something to offer, be it cooperation funds or experience in effecting in-depth reforms in their respective systems, which may well be helpful to other countries.

Mexico not only has carried out a major transformation of its economic development model but is also promoting an in-depth reform of its administrative machinery. Therefore, we offer to share Mexico's experience with United Nations international experts and with countries active in international assistance in this field. We are confident that our experience could be of some help to Member States that might be trying to carry out similar reform processes.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Ghana.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): Permit me at the outset to express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his very informative report on public administration and development, contained in document A/50/847, and to the United Nations Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance for the report on its twelfth meeting.

We also wish to acknowledge the important contributions made by the Department for Development Support and Management Services and all the collaborators on the subject of public administration and development, including the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme.

As acknowledged in the Secretary-General's report, this is the first time that the General Assembly has met to specifically address the question of public administration and development. We commend the Organization for this initiative, because the Government of Ghana recognizes the vital role of public administration in development, particularly its role in the effectiveness and sustainability of development.

Significant political and economic changes are taking place all over the world, characterized by, among other things, a growing concern for democratization and good governance, by the increasing resort to privatization and greater reliance on market forces, by an enhanced awareness of the need to mobilize domestic resources and reduce fiscal deficits, by growing participation of non-governmental and community-based organizations in development processes and by greater recognition of the need to ensure that development is not only sustainable but also environmentally sound.

Furthermore, the programmes of action adopted at recent major United Nations conferences contain specific goals that have to be attained within specified time-frames. All these developments call for effective public-sector management as well as a fundamental restructuring of public institutions. And since the driving force behind any public-sector management or institutional reform is the government, there is an urgent need for an agreed redefinition of the role of government, particularly in relation to economic growth and sustainable development.

In this connection, my delegation agrees with the definition of the core functions of government given by the United Nations Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance and recalled in paragraph 125 of the Secretary-General's report: promoting an enabling environment for development, working as the engine of development, playing a major role in building development capacity and remedying the development deficiencies and failings of other social institutions. We agree with this definition because we share the important view, also expressed by the Group of Experts, that public administration is government in action, while development is seen as being the objective or purpose of all government action.

The task of equipping itself adequately to fulfil these core functions of government in the light of the new challenges has engaged the attention of the Government of Ghana since the beginning of our economic recovery programme in 1983. To ensure the success of the programme and to secure the changes required to achieve the administrative capabilities for sustained national development, the Government of Ghana initiated a major administrative reform of the public sector as a matter of high priority on its development agenda.

A civil-service reform programme was undertaken with the support of the World Bank and bilateral donors. The programme was geared towards improving certain areas of the civil service, including personnel policy and management, income policy and salary administration, labour rationalization, training and manpower development and records management and improvement.

Specific actions undertaken by the Government under the programme included the introduction of a new staff performance appraisal system, based on promotion by merit rather than by longevity of service; replacement of the old, defective salary structure, which bred disparities and inequities, with a better system based on job evaluation and systematic review of salaries; revamping and reinforcement of the management services division to enable it to carry out its management functions more effectively; identification of excess labour and non-essential functions; and the substantial reduction of staffing strengths and subsequent retraining and resettling of redeployed staff.

To democratize State power and institutionalize decision-making at the grass-roots level, the Government evolved the concept of district assemblies, under which political and administrative authority was effectively decentralized, with the district assembly becoming responsible for the overall development of the district and constituting the first coordinating level for national development planning and administration.

Our decentralization programme brought about the devolution of power and responsibility to the ordinary people and made the new district assembly the focal point of local authority and governance. Under the Local Government Act, responsibility for the operation of 22 Government departments was transferred to the district assemblies, and a district assembly common fund was established to provide assistance to district assemblies for their development programmes.

The country's 110 district assemblies now work with 10 regional coordinating councils, whose main functions include coordinating and formulating integrated district plans and programmes, and ensuring their harmonization with approved national development policies and priorities. Inputs from the regional coordinating councils go to the National Development Planning Commission, whose functions include the strategic analysis of macroeconomic and structural reform options, and proposals for ensuring the even development of districts through the efficient utilization of available resources.

In addition to the devolution of power and responsibility to the ordinary people, the Government began its privatization programme, providing support and incentives for the private sector to become an effective engine of growth to help facilitate the systematic alleviation of poverty and raise living standards.

Command economy theories and practices are no longer favoured in Ghana. Our Government believes that business is best left to businessmen and that the proper role of government in this respect is to create an enabling environment in which the private sector can thrive as an engine of growth. To this end, it has facilitated the establishment of a private-sector advisory group, which interacts with it on a sustained and regular basis with a view to progressively improving the economic and business climate.

Even though the civil-service reform programme achieved some encouraging results, it was constrained by a number of factors, including the ad hoc and prescriptive manner of its implementation, constraints by donor requirements and timetables and the placing of too much emphasis on reducing the cost and size of the civil service at the expense of developing the capacity of civil servants. Consequently, the Government launched a new programme in 1994, the National Institutional Renewal Programme, with the aim of addressing the weaknesses of the previous programme and comprehensively restructuring the public sector to enhance its capacity to contribute to the attainment of broad policy objectives in the areas of good governance, accelerated economic growth, private-sector development and equitable social development.

The Government's programme to achieve good governance entails strengthening the capacity of public-sector institutions to function effectively through prompt, strengthened and decentralized service delivery and strengthened capacity of local training institutions. Specific actions in the area of institutional renewal involve reviewing policies, objectives and programmes to ensure their consistency with national policy goals and objectives and making institutions more cost-effective through, *inter alia*, the transfer, when necessary, of service delivery to the private sector, non-governmental organizations or communities.

Since last year, the Government has also launched a financial management reform programme, with the aims, *inter alia*, of improving accountability, control, monitoring and auditing and of ensuring transparency in the management of Government finances. Additionally, a civil-service improvement programme has been introduced that involves a home-grown methodology based on a bottom-up approach. It is designed to achieve participation and consensus-building with ministries, departments, agencies and the regional coordinating councils. The programme also seeks to identify areas of skills shortages; develop human-resource potential; establish a culture of strategic planning, target-setting and performance measurement; and improve the responsiveness of the civil service to the needs of the private sector. The rationale behind all this is to develop the capacity of the civil service to enable it to deliver value-for-money services under the mantle of good governance.

Despite the improvements achieved in our public administration under these reform programmes, the problem of inadequate work capacity in the public sector still persists. Our public administration system, though more efficient now, is still unable to mobilize adequate resources and allocate them effectively for sustainable national development. Funds for basic logistics are in short supply or are released late. Freedom to manage resources is still heavily circumscribed. The machinery for monitoring implementing agencies is still inadequate, as is the legal and administrative instruction framework.

But perhaps the greatest constraint facing our public administration is human-resource management. The single most important factor in any public administration is

human resources. In this highly competitive era, an organization can succeed only if it is staffed by competent and motivated personnel. Today's public administration systems need to attract and maintain the best-quality personnel available in the entire workforce if they are to effectively implement their programmes.

It is within this context that my delegation stresses the need to urgently consider the impact of structural adjustment programmes on the public service. In this connection, the documents and publications of the ILO on the theme "The impact of structural adjustment on the public sector" should receive appropriate consideration. It is necessary for national Governments and the international community to recognize and appreciate the impact, for example, of redeployment accompanied by reduction in subsidies and social benefits on the public sector. It is our view that the public sector, whose staffing strength, subsidies and social benefits have been substantially reduced without a corresponding programme to adequately remunerate and motivate the remaining staff, is bound to become inefficient and incapable of achieving development objectives.

Much as we need to implement structural adjustment programmes, we should be enabled to do so without impairing the efficiency, morale and motivation of our public service. We wish to see this concern addressed in the resolution to be adopted at the conclusion of our deliberations.

In its efforts to achieve its long-term objectives of good governance, accelerated and sustained economic growth and sustainable development, Ghana would like to receive increased technical assistance to enable its public-sector institutions to develop the required skills in diplomacy, analysis, plan formulation, implementation and monitoring, performance management systems, management of donor funding and contract arrangements, as well as data collection and analysis.

Equally important for the success of our programme would be twinning arrangements between local and foreign institutions, including consultancy firms, in the form of attachments, joint bidding and execution of local assignments.

We have read with attention, interest and satisfaction the detailed account of the activities of the United Nations system and of the agencies in the area of public administration and development, recorded in section II of the Secretary-General's report.

We wish to express our deep appreciation for these activities and particularly for the assistance so far extended to my Government in its public-administration reform programmes. We urge continuation and intensification of these activities.

Various recommendations aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations in public administration and development are submitted in section IV of the Secretary-General's report (A/50/847). My delegation generally endorses these recommendations. In particular, in view of the importance we attach to the question of public administration and finance and to the need for the United Nations to strengthen its assistance delivery to national Governments to achieve their development goals, my delegation endorses the recommendation that the question of public administration and development should be included as a regular item on the agendas of both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

We also support the recommendation that the United Nations Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance be designated the United Nations Committee on Public Administration and Development, bearing in mind that this will have no additional financial implications if the new Committee maintains the same schedule of meetings as that of the Group of Experts.

Furthermore, my delegation supports the recommendation that the United Nations programme on public administration and other United Nations agencies should assist Governments in translating the goals and recommendations of global conferences into detailed programmes of implementation. The United Nations should further assist Governments in establishing institutions and in creating conditions which will facilitate a healthy private sector. We also endorse the recommendation that the United Nations should help war-ravaged countries to improve their administrative systems through the repair of the relevant Government machinery after conflict.

As regards the donor community, we urge donors to enhance their recognition of the role and significance of public administration in development and to provide adequate resources in their programmes of assistance for improving public administration in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition.

Lastly, my delegation has taken due note of the recommendations addressed to national Governments, which are recorded in section IV B of the Secretary-

General's report. Most of these recommendations are already incorporated in our public-administration development programmes. We shall continue to implement them and all others with all the relevant resources at our disposal in the earnest hope and expectation that the international community will not only continue to support our endeavours in this regard, but will increase its volume of assistance.

The Acting President: I call on Miss Patricia Durrant, Permanent Representative of Jamaica.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): Good governance is synonymous with sound management of a country's economic, social and physical resources in order to secure development. Governance involves guiding societies to cope constructively and creatively with development issues. In these terms, governance is the process by which we will collectively solve society's problems and address its needs. Such a process involves teamwork and partnerships. Also needed in this process are sound socio-economic policies, an environment that fosters equitable development, as well as institutions and other opportunities for the involvement of all people affected by the design and use of public policy.

It is against this background that my delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document A/50/847, which highlights the role which the United Nations can play in facilitating the exchange of ideas, experiences and innovations among Member States in the field of public administration and development.

We also wish to recognize the valuable technical assistance and advisory services which the United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral agencies can provide to complement the activities of national Governments. We strongly support the call for the United Nations system to be strengthened in order to enable it to more effectively implement concepts of public administration and finance that serve the urgent needs of Member States, particularly those of the developing countries.

The meeting of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance, which was held in New York from 31 July to 11 August 1995, underscored the importance of issues related to the effective functioning of Government and the need to improve continually public-administration systems. It also reiterated that public administration and finance are "the backbone of development efforts" *(A/50/525, para. 10)*. The Group of Experts concluded *inter alia* that the role of public administration in development is multiform, as it helps sustain economic growth, promote social development and put infrastructure in place.

The recommendations for national Governments which emanated from this meeting are particularly useful, since they span areas ranging from policy development, administrative restructuring and reform, improvement in public-sector performance and social development, to development of infrastructure and environmental protection. These recommendations point to the need for public administrative systems to be responsive to the changing environment. The interregional seminars organized by the United Nations in preparation for this resumed session of the General Assembly have usefully focused on these aspects of public administration.

Jamaica participated actively in the Interregional Seminar held in Rio de Janeiro in March 1996, on the Role of Public Administration in developing Infrastructure and Protecting the Environment. The seminar highlighted the importance of the responsibility of Governments and public administrative systems in promoting sustainable development, including environmental protection. Participants in the seminar came away with the realization that public administrative capabilities to strengthen sustainable development are important and that unless public administration is more efficient and effective, the objectives for environmental protection and sustainable development, as articulated in Agenda 21, cannot be achieved. This has implications for our common global agenda.

Jamaica has long recognized the importance of a well-organized career civil service to economic and social development and has in recent years undertaken a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening the Country's system of public administration. In its 1991 policy statement on administrative reform the Government of Jamaica emphasized its intention to withdraw as far as possible from commercial activities, to reduce restrictions on production and the movement of goods and services, to streamline the public sector and to improve the performance and effectiveness of the central administration.

In support of this intention, the Government commenced the implementation of the Financial and Programme Management Improvement Project, assisted by World Bank financing. The project focuses on improvement of corporate planning, programme budgeting and financial accounting, with the installation

of a computerized Financial Management Information System and development of a computerized Human Resource Management Information System.

Jamaica's Ministry of Finance has been engaged in the Financial Management Improvement Programme, a component of the Government's Administrative Reform Programme. Through this Programme, substantial progress has been made in designing and introducing modern systems of budgeting, accounting and financial reporting.

A system of annual corporate plans has been introduced with a viable national long-term plan. Special emphasis has been placed on strengthening of human-resource management systems in order to improve the skills required to support the reform process, since we fully recognize that systems by themselves are not sufficient and must be backed by properly trained and competent staff.

To ensure that all the elements — financial management, human-resource management and the corporate planning process — are properly undertaken, appropriate staff training programmes and, importantly, assessments of effectiveness, are being put in place.

A revamped Cabinet Office was put into operation in July 1993, headed by a Cabinet Secretary, along the lines of some Commonwealth countries, to be responsible, under the direction of the Prime Minister, for, among other things, the efficient and effective operations of the business of the Cabinet and the reform of the public service.

More recently, a Public Sector Modernization Project has been prepared which takes account of changing global perceptions concerning the role of the State and, in particular, its role as facilitator rather than leader, in the development process. Primary focus is being given to mergers of some entities, privatization of others, abolition of redundant ones and "right-sizing" and strengthening the remaining work force and statutory bodies. Financing for this project is being discussed with multilateral and bilateral agencies.

A novel feature in the strengthening process will be the conversion of selected Government organizations into executive agencies, as has been done in a number of Commonwealth countries. In these agencies, chief executive officers will be given full autonomy over the management of human and financial resources, provided with adequate resources and held accountable for the performance of the agencies, with the aim of significantly improving the service delivery of each agency.

An important component of the reforms will be the establishment of standards against which the performance of agencies can be monitored. Early attention is being given to the customer-service agencies, the aim being to create an ethic which recognizes the primacy of the public as valued customers.

Another component of the reform programme will concern the strengthening of procurement procedures within the Government.

An Efficiency and Reform Directorate has been established in the Office of the Cabinet to manage many of the changes proposed. A division of the Directorate, the Management Institute for National Development, is primarily responsible for training in the public sector.

The cooperation of the stakeholders is being sought mainly through dialogues with the parties concerned.

The Government of Jamaica has undertaken the aforementioned initiatives in order to position Jamaica to compete more effectively in the changing global environment, to generate income and employment and to provide higher real standards of living for its people.

The Jamaican Government believes that sound public administrative systems must be built on the concept of partnerships between the relevant sectors of society. Towards this end, the Government has launched a social partnership — between the Government, the private sector, trade unions, community and non-governmental organizations — in which all sectors are expected to play an important part.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate the important thrust of this resumed session, which emphasizes the role of good governance and participatory democracy and the strengthening of public administrative systems for the promotion of sustainable development.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.